

2008 Michigan Notable book Author Biographies

Tom Bissell was born in Escanaba, Michigan, in 1974. After graduating from Michigan State University, he worked as a Peace Corps volunteer in Uzbekistan and then as a book editor in New York City. Since 2001 he has been a full-time writer and traveled widely in the Canadian Arctic, Central and Southeast Asia, and covered the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. His first book, *Chasing the Sea*, was published in 2003 and was followed shortly thereafter by *Speak, Commentary*, a humor book he coauthored with Jeff Alexander. In 2005 he published the story collection *God Lives in St. Petersburg*, and for it was awarded a Rome Fellowship by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He is a contributing editor for *Harper's Magazine* and *The Virginia Quarterly Review*. His work is often anthologized and has been published in several languages.

After a long stint on the assembly line at Fisher Body Flint Plant No. 1, **Christopher Paul Curtis** achieved a bestseller with the publication of *Bud, Not Buddy*, which won the Newbery Medal and the Coretta Scott King Award. **Elijah of Buxton** is a Coretta Scott King winner for 2008 and also a Newbery Honor book. He is a native of Flint, Michigan. He and his wife, Kaysandra, have two children and live in Windsor, Ontario, Canada. He loves to play basketball and collect old record albums. His favorite books include anything by Toni Morrison, Kurt Vonnegut, and Zora Neale Hurston.

Thomas M. DeFrank is the Washington Bureau Chief of the New York Daily News and was Newsweek's White House Correspondent for a quarter century and deputy chief of the magazine's Washington Bureau for 12 years. First assigned by Newsweek to Ford in 1973, he traveled regularly with Ford aboard Air Force 2 and then Air Force 1 until 1977. DeFrank was the last reporter to interview Ford in May 2006 and the last to visit him in November 2006. He lives in Washington, DC.

Mike Fornes (FORNS) has covered the Mackinac Bridge for more than 20 years for several media outlets in Northern Michigan, including radio and television stations and the Cheboygan Daily Tribune.

He broke the story of Leslie Pluhar's Yugo plummeting off the bridge for WPNB/WTOM TV 7&4 after noticing police lights on the span from the dining room window of his home on the Straits of Mackinac. The incident was named the top news story in the state of Michigan for 1989.

A resident of Mackinaw City, Mich., he enjoys scuba diving and sailing among his interests in the Northern Michigan area. He is also the author of "USCGC Mackinaw WAGB 83 – An Illustrated History of a Great Lakes Queen."

Dan Gerber has published seven collections of poetry, three novels, a book of short stories, and two books of nonfiction. His poetry book *Trying to Catch the Horses* (MSU Press, 1999) received ForeWord magazine's Gold Medal Book of the Year Award in Poetry. Gerber's work has appeared in many magazines and anthologies, including *The New Yorker*, *Poetry*, *The Georgia Review*, and *Best American Poetry*. With his wife, Debbie, and with numerous animals, he lives in the Santa Ynez Valley of central California.

Sculptor, painter, and mixed media artist, **Tyree Guyton** was born & raised in Detroit, Michigan. He is internationally known for his work on the Heidelberg Project, an outdoor installation on Detroit's east side. Through his art, Tyree has drawn attention to the plight of Detroit's forgotten neighborhood. He continues to live & work in the city, working with children on Heidelberg Street almost daily as he guides the Heidelberg Project forward with energy and inspiration. He has shared his vision around the world.

Jim Harrison was born in December in Grayling, MI, and has spent much of his life in Michigan. He now lives in Montana and has reluctantly sold his Michigan cabin. A graduate from Michigan State University, his career has included teaching, poet, journalist, novelist, screenplay writer, outdoor writer, food writer, critic, and bon vivant. He is possibly best known for *Legends of the Fall*, which was made into a movie starring Brad Pitt. The most influential writers for Harrison were Hemingway, Steinbeck, and John O'Hara. Jim Harrison's work has been published in 22 different languages. He has been married to Linda for over 40 years, and has two daughters and several grandchildren. This is Jim Harrison's 6th time on the Michigan Notable Books list.

Mark Hoffman is the author of "My Brave Mechanics: The Michigan Engineers and Their Civil War. The book is the culmination of more than twenty years of research on the subject and draws heavily on soldier letters, diaries, and other wartime primary sources. Hoffman is currently deputy director, Michigan Department of History, Arts and Libraries and earned a B. A. from Michigan State University.

Lita Judge is a picture book author and illustrator. Her first book, *One Thousand Tracings*, is a true story about her grandparents, who lived in Pinckney, Michigan, and how they started a relief effort after WWII, which ultimately helped hundreds of families in Europe. *One Thousand Tracings* has won the National Parenting Publications Gold Award and has been honored by the New York Public Library and the Society of School Librarians International. Lita currently has picture books in progress with Hyperion, Roaring Brook Press and Viking.

Author **Sharon Kegerreis** (KEG-err-us) was raised in Charlevoix, where her love of pristine lakes and nature was ignited. A communication degree from Central Michigan University helped launch her 17-year marketing and public relations career in Colorado, where she relocated to immediately following graduation. In the Rockies, Sharon wrote and produced television commercials. She moved to California in pursuit of more adventures and worked in the high-tech industry, promoting products to worldwide media. In 1997, Sharon returned to Michigan to direct marketing for a Lansing-based engineering firm. Sharon's passion for wine grew through years of travel in the U.S. and abroad and a discovery of Michigan's wine trails. In 2003, she co-launched Michigan Vine to promote wine country and co-authored *From the Vine: Exploring Michigan Wineries*, her first book. Sharon resides in Chelsea with her husband and two children, where she writes from the comfort of her home - often with a glass of Michigan wine at her side

Lorri Hathaway acquired a passion for Michigan while growing up in the booming tourism industry of Leelanau Peninsula. After high school, she attended Central Michigan University and earned a degree in business administration prior to heading to Lansing and earning a real estate broker's license. During her 10-year career in commercial real estate focusing on landlord representation, shopping centers and restaurants, Lorri also gained a passion for both wine and travel. In 2003 and baby number one on the way, Lorri chucked the corporate world and co-launched Michigan Vine to promote Michigan wine country and further her desire to write. She co-authored her first book, *From the Vine: Exploring Michigan Wineries*, in 2006 and is currently working on additional writing projects. Lorri resides in East Lansing with her husband and four children and continues to explore our Great Lakes state.

Ted Kluck's work has appeared in ESPN the Magazine, Sports Spectrum Magazine, ESPN.com Page2, and several small literary journals. A bi-monthly column for Sports Spectrum Magazine entitled Pro and Con won the Evangelical Press Association award for best standing column in 2003.

His first book, *Facing Tyson: 15 Fighters, 15 Stories*, was published by the Lyons Press in October 2006, and published internationally by Mainstream Publishing in 2007. His next two books, *Paper Tiger: One Athlete's Journey to the Underbelly of Pro Football* and *Game Time: Inside College Football* released in September 2007.

Additionally, Ted has written three WGA registered screenplays and an award-winning (Sabaoth Film Festival) short film. He has played professional indoor football, coached high school football and taught writing courses at the college level. He lives in Grand Ledge, MI with his wife Kristin and son Tristan.

Elmore Leonard was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. After working as a copywriter in Detroit for a few years, he began writing. He now has more than 30 bestselling mystery novels to his credit. He has been called the best living practitioner of American Crime Fiction. This is his 2nd time on the Michigan Notable Books list.

Diane Maddex is an author whose recent books include six on Frank Lloyd Wright. As president of Archetype Press, a producer of illustrated books, she has developed scores of titles on architecture and design. She previously served as book publisher of National Trust for Historical Preservation and has been named an honorary member of the American Institute of Architects.

Maggie Nelson is the recent author of a critical study about poetry and painting titled *Women, the New York School, and Other True Abstractions* (University of Iowa Press, 2007), as well as a fourth collection of poetry, *Something Bright, Then Holes* (Soft Skull Press, 2007). Her previous books of poems include *Jane: A Murder* (Soft Skull, 2005; finalist, the PEN/Martha Albrand Award for the Art of the Memoir), *The Latest Winter* (Hanging Loose Press, 2003), and *Shiner* (Hanging Loose, 2001; finalist, the Poetry Society of America's Norma Farber First Book Award). She holds a Ph.D. in English Literature from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, and has taught writing and literature at the Graduate Writing Program of the New School, Pratt Institute of Art, and Wesleyan University. In 2007 she was awarded an Arts Writers grant from the Creative Capital/Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Currently she teaches on the faculty of the School of Critical Studies at California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) and lives in Los Angeles. A book about the color blue, titled *Bluets*, is forthcoming from Wave Books in 2009.

Bich Minh Nguyen (bit min ny-en) was born in Vietnam and moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan at the age of 3. She now lives with her husband, the novelist Porter Shreve, in Chicago. She teaches literature and creative writing at Purdue University.

John Otterbacher has his doctorates in clinical psychology, has taught college, served as a state representative and senator (Michigan), worked as a psychotherapist, and taken some long sails. He currently lives, writes, and maintains a small private practice in Michigan. *Sailing Grace* is his first book.

Robert Dale Parker is a professor of English and American Indian Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He also taught at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, from 1982-84. An award-winning teacher, Parker has also written books on a wide range of topics in American literature and American Indian literature. In recent years he has particularly researched early American Indian writing, trying to change the general lack of awareness of the long literary tradition among American Indians. As part of that research, he read the writings of Jane Johnston Schoolcraft, an early nineteenth-century Ojibwe and Irish-American writer from what is now the state of Michigan who is the first-known American Indian literary writer. Once he saw a few of her manuscripts, he suspected that if he looked, he might find more, and then once he found more, he got hooked and kept looking for more and, eventually, finding more. *The Sound the Stars Make Rushing Through the Sky: The Writings of Jane Johnston Schoolcraft* includes a complete edition of Schoolcraft's writings and a cultural history and biography.

Patty Pinner grew up in Saginaw, Michigan. She still lives there, and when she is not baking pies, she is a trainer for the U.S. Postal Service. She is also the author of *Sweets: A Collection of Soul Food Desserts and Memories*, which was selected by the New York Times as one of the best cookbooks of 2003. This is Patty's 2nd time on the list.

Paul Trynka is a former editor of Mojo magazine. He has also been the editorial director of Q Magazine; launch editor of The Guitar Magazine, and editor-in-chief of New Projects at Emap. He is the author of *Portrait of the Blues*, and of *Denim*, a history of the fabric. He lives in Greenwich, London. He lives in Greenwich, London, with partner Lucy and son, Curtis.

Eric Villegas (VIL-lay-gus) is an award winning chef-restaurateur, cookbook author and television personality. He is also the host of the WKAR TV show, *Fork in the Road*, the food show that celebrates the diverse food heritage of the Great Lakes region. Born in Michigan, he embarked on his culinary career after studying at Michigan State University. He moved to Paris to attend culinary school for several years and gained experience by cooking in Lyons, France. From 1987 to 2007, Villegas operated two of mid-Michigan's most unique award winning regional restaurants.